
Questions and answers: Safety alert: Seatbelts imported by BVL (Business Ventures Limited)

NZ Transport Agency
UPDATE: November 2018

Why update the BVL safety alert and these Q&As?

The NZ Transport Agency first issued a [safety alert](#) regarding seatbelts in October 2018 which we have now updated after further investigations. We are urging people that if retrofitted BVL seatbelts (manufactured by either Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.) are fitted in their vehicle in the driver's seat, they do not use their vehicle until replacements are fitted. If fitted in other seating positions, the advice is not to allow passengers to use those seats.

These seatbelts are the subject of a safety alert following Transport Agency tests and investigations indicating they do not meet an approved safety standard.

How were you alerted to the unsafe seatbelts?

After being advised by an industry source that BVL seatbelts manufactured by Changzhou BWD are a safety risk, the Transport Agency purchased a selection of the seatbelts. It then commissioned and attended independent testing to confirm if they met an approved safety standard. The test results indicated that although the seatbelts are labelled as compliant, they do not meet an approved safety standard.

The tests indicate that occupants wearing BVL imported seatbelts manufactured by Changzhou BWD seatbelts are not protected in the event of a collision.

As a result, the Transport Agency issued a [safety alert](#) (updated November 2018) and instructed Warrant of Fitness (WoF) and Certification of Fitness (CoF) inspectors to fail a vehicle if BVL seatbelts manufactured by Changzhou BWD are present.

The New Zealand supplier of these seatbelts, BVL, agreed to initiate a safety recall which involved replacing seatbelts manufactured by Changzhou BWD with seatbelts manufactured by Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.

However, the agency investigated the seatbelts supplied by BVL, manufactured by Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd., and **found the replacement seatbelts to be non-compliant**. The Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd. Seatbelts supplied by BVL to the New Zealand market do not correspond to the certified product.

What types of vehicles are affected?

BVL seatbelts are mostly used for retrofitting into modified vehicles such as vans, buses and motorhomes. They are also commonly used to replace original vehicle seatbelts if they've been damaged and fail a vehicle inspection. BVL seatbelts are not installed by major automotive companies when vehicles are newly manufactured.

The failures identified in testing were related to over-the-shoulder belts that have a 'd-ring' and retractor. Most lap belts do not have these features and are not being included in this safety alert.

How many vehicles are affected, and where are they located?

The Transport Agency is working with BVL to determine exact quantities, but the seatbelts have been distributed throughout New Zealand to owners through retailers and other sources, including repair shops and vehicle modifiers.

How do I know if these seatbelts are in my vehicle?

BVL seatbelts were sold through numerous retail outlets and repair shops as replacement belts - generally after failing an inspection (WoF/CoF) due to seatbelts being worn or damaged.

These were also installed in new vehicles by van, bus and coach builders. As general-use belts, these may have also been fitted into older cars, hot-rods, etc.

Our updated [safety alert](#) has photos of the seatbelt label. Check for BVL and Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd. (as shown in safety alert photos) on the label. The label can be found at the end of the seatbelt strap, located outboard of the seat, by the door frame.

Is it safe to drive my vehicle if I have these seatbelts installed?

No. We are urging people that if retrofitted BVL seatbelts (manufactured by either Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.) are fitted in their vehicle in the driver's seat, they do not use their vehicle until replacements are fitted. If fitted in other seating positions, the advice is not to allow passengers to use those seats. We have also instructed vehicle inspectors to fail a vehicle for its Warrant of Fitness (WoF) or Certificate of Fitness (CoF) inspection if these seatbelts are identified in a vehicle.

My vehicle has lap belts that say BVL. Are they safe to use?

The failures identified in testing were in 'over-the-shoulder' seatbelts that have a 'd-ring' and retractor. Further investigation focused on 3-point seatbelts. Most lap belts don't have these features and are not included in the safety alert.

What kind of assistance are you providing to vehicle owners affected by this action?

Contact details for assistance from the Transport Agency are available at the bottom of this document.

Why was BVL allowed to sell faulty seatbelts?

The Transport Agency requires that replacement seatbelts meet an approved safety standard. The BVL seatbelts are marked as certified to an approved safety standard but after investigating, there isn't evidence to support the certification mark.

Are there any other faulty seatbelts in the market?

The Transport Agency isn't aware of other faulty seatbelts in the market.

Who pays for a replacement seatbelt?

If your vehicle has an affected seatbelt please contact the reseller from whom you purchased the belt for advice on getting the seatbelts replaced with a safe alternative. Alternatively, please contact Business Ventures Limited on info@bvl.co.nz or 09 574 6724.

Is my vehicle safe?

The testing that the Transport Agency commissioned showed that the BVL seatbelts manufactured by Changzhou BWD are unsafe. The investigation by the Agency on seatbelts manufactured by Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd. showed that there's no evidence of certification, even though they are labelled as compliant to an approved European standard.

We are urging people that if retrofitted BVL seatbelts (manufactured by Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.) are fitted in their vehicle in the driver's seat, they do not use their vehicle until replacements are fitted. If fitted in other seating positions, the advice is not to allow passengers to use those seats. We have also instructed vehicle inspectors to fail a vehicle for its Warrant of Fitness (WoF) or Certificate of Fitness (CoF) inspection if these seatbelts are identified in a vehicle.

What are the next steps I should take after identifying a BVL seatbelt manufactured by Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.?

We are urging people that if retrofitted BVL seatbelts (manufactured by Changzhou BWD or Jiang Su Jiu Jiu Traffic Facilities Co. Ltd.) are fitted in their vehicle in the driver's seat, they do not use their vehicle until replacements are fitted. If fitted in other seating positions, the advice is not to allow passengers to use those seats.

If these seatbelts are in your vehicle, they should be removed and replaced with other appropriate standards-approved seatbelts as soon as possible.

Seatbelts should not be mixed and matched. Both the retractor side and the buckle side need to be replaced. Even if a mismatched pair appears to work together, there's no guarantee it will remain engaged in the event of a crash.

Who can I contact to discuss this further?

If your vehicle has an affected seatbelt please contact the reseller from whom you purchased the belt for advice on getting the seatbelts replaced with a safe alternative. Alternatively, please contact Business Ventures Limited on info@bvl.co.nz or 09 574 6724.

Who can I contact at the Transport Agency to discuss this further?

If you would like to discuss this further, we recommend you follow up with an email to info@nzta.govt.nz with BVL and your vehicle's registration plate number in the subject line.